

Presentation by member of the CEC of Russia
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Securing safety and authenticity of election documentation

Dear organizers and members of the conference,
colleagues, ladies and gentlemen!

Let me thank you for the opportunity to speak at the annual conference and session of the General Assembly of the Association of European Election Officials on such urgent subject as safety and authenticity of election documentation.

The main criteria for referring documents to election are their direct contents and meaning for preparing and holding election. National law refers the following documents to election: voter lists; ballots, absentee certificates, protocols of election commissions on vote returns, and also other documents specified in the election legislation which are made up (produced) during an election campaign and having an influence on vote returns and election results. Safety and authenticity of all election documentation is secured by the system of legal and organization measurement.

I. Unauthenticity of election documentation means that they do not match authentic legal documentation either approved by election commissions or produced by printeries to their order or signed (certified) by respective officials of election commission. As a rule unauthenticity is the result of falsification, untrue information or forgery. The authenticity issue with subscription lists oftentimes arises because of their wrong execution. Subscription lists are qualified for their compliance with a set form, rules of filling, authenticity of voters' personal signatures. It has a decisive meaning for resolving a dispute about legitimacy of refusing a candidate's registration. According to the national law a signature collected with violation of the signature collection procedure and (or) executing a subscription list is considered invalid. And a signature made in the name of one person by another person is considered unauthentic. Acceptance and verification of subscription lists are carried out as specified in the national law and statutory acts of the CEC. Thus, according to resolutions by the CEC,

working groups for accepting and verifying election documentation were formed for the federal election campaigns in 2007 and 2008. Besides the CEC members and its personnel, handwriting experts from law machinery worked in the commissions, and the possibility of involving them is specified in the national law.

II. One of important conditions for citizens to implement their suffrage is complete and accurate voter registration. The current system of voter registration in the Russian Federation solves its assigned task in whole. The national election legislation specifies procedure for making voter lists, and the CEC normative documents regulate all its procedures in detail. Violation of the established procedure of presenting information on voters or presentation of untrue information on them to respective election commissions causes administrative responsibility in accordance with Clause 5.4. of the Russian Code on Administrative Infraction.

Voter lists are made using the Russian Federation National automated system “Election”. Securing information safety together with system openness and availability of the information contained therein is the most important principle for applying automated system. Subsystem for securing safety secures information protection from unauthorized accessibility, cryptographic information protection when it’s channelized, protection of interaction of computer-aided objects of different levels using the system for detecting and preventing attacks. During the presidential election in Russian Federation in March 2008, for example, about 133 thousand potentially dangerous impacts on the CEC Internet-site of Russian Federation, including 627 computer attacks, and during election in the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation in December 2007 – about 3 thousand potentially dangerous information impacts, including 470 attacks were registered and repelled.

Making a voter list and its updating afterwards is made on the basis of official documents of the territorial bodies of the Federal Migration Service, military registration and enlistment offices, registry offices, courts and others, i.e. from different official sources. They send the above-mentioned information either to the territorial election commission or to the precinct election commission every three days over 20 days before the Election Day, and daily over 7 and less days before the Election Day. Each office keeps an electronic information base on citizens by their own rules. These

information bases are highly dynamic; an active population migration is going on at present. We shouldn't also forget that there is the so-called human factor when it comes to transporting data to voter lists, and errors and inaccuracies may happen in this connection.

The Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation solves these problems with the help of voter register, which has been constantly formed and kept since 2005. It contains a set of personal data about all voters registered in the Russian Federation. The data of the register are used when making voter lists in all elections and referendums held in the Russian Federation, when verifying subscription lists collected in support a candidate nomination in all-level elections, when forming electoral districts and electoral precincts and when solving other tasks.

Work results of accuracy in making voter lists can be illustrated with the following data: in election of the President of the Russian Federation a number of voters registered in a list additionally on the election day on the territory of the Russian Federation (except those who voted with absentee certificates) made about 790 thousand of the number of voters registered in voter lists (0, 74 %). It clearly indicates a high quality (purity) of voter lists, thus in international practice of holding election the respective index is 1 to 3 %.

The voter list is kept as a rule by the head or the secretary of the election commission, in a sealed safe, and strangers are not allowed to access. The voter lists are kept for one year from the date of official promulgation of vote returns.

III. Ballots and absentee certificates have a special place among electoral documentation. These documents status and requirements are specified in the national legislation and normative documents of the CEC of Russia.

In federal election campaigns, for example, they marked each ballot with a special sign in the upper right corner, and also put the precinct election commission seal, and two members of the precinct election commission with the decisive vote signed them to protect ballots from falsification. The special signs (marks) were used to protect ballots in the federal election in 2007 for the first time. In the past federal election to protect a ballot a special paint, a shield grid and a micro text were used when producing it. It was almost impossible to falsify the special sign (mark) as it belongs to

typographic products with over eight degrees of protection. Production of the marks and their delivery on the territory of the Russian Federation subjects were under control of the CEC representatives, and their transfer to lower election commissions was under control of the heads of respective election commissions. Regulations of the Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation also established an accounting procedure for using the marks and procedure of keeping them.

Production of ballots was also under control of representatives from the election commissions with a deliberative vote on all stages, including delivery. Besides according to the national legislation, this process could also be under control of members of the election commissions with a deliberative vote, authorized representatives from political parties, and in the election of the President of the Russian Federation – registered candidates and their authorized representatives. And respective election commissions informed without fail all the mentioned persons about a place and time of ballot transfer and gave an opportunity to be present there.

Absentee certificates gave an opportunity to vote for those voters who couldn't be present in the voting premises of their precinct el com where they were registered in a voter list. In the election of the State Duma deputies of the fifth convocation 1,68 % voters participating in a vote used this possibility.

In the election of the President of the Russian Federation in 2008 measures to strengthen control over absentee certificates usage were taken. They started including a voter's passport information, writing down an address of the precinct el com, where the citizen was in the list; a position of the commission member who issued the certificate was specified. Heads of the territorial commissions and precincts el com who transfer, accept and keep ballots are responsible for transfer and safety of ballots and certificates.

IV. After the vote counting and drawing up a protocol on voting returns safety and authenticity of election documentation is also secured. In the election legislation of the Russian Federation, the CEC instructions the procedure of vote counting, drawing up the protocol on voting returns, issuing its copies and working with it after signing it are described in detail, stage by stage and step by step. The protocol is valid if it's signed by the majority of the established number of precinct el com members with a decisive vote. A possibility to receive copies and a procedure of certifying copies is also

specified in the national legislation, which is a guarantee of true establishment of vote returns. Considering especial urgency of these issues, the CEC of Russia prepared a special instruction film about the procedure of issuing copies of the protocol on voting returns.

The head (deputy head), the secretary of the commission is made responsible for election documentation safety by a decision of this election commission before transferring the documentation to either the higher election commission or to an archive or its deletion on keeping time expiration. Keeping, transferring to an archive or deleting documentation is executed according to the national legislation and normative documents of the CEC of Russia. On expiration of keeping time persistent documentation are transferred to national archives, and temporary documentation are deleted according to the established Order. For example, starting the next year the CEC of Russia will transfer to the National archive of the Russian Federation documentation relating to preparing and holding national voting for the Russian Federation Constitution project, for electing members of the Federation Council and deputies of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation of the first convocation.

In conclusion of my speech I would like to say that level of requirements for producing election documentation, its protection from falsification, procedure of keeping election documentation is constantly increasing, as it directly influence legitimacy of elected government and Russian voters' trust in them.

Thank you for your attention!